

OPENING STATEMENT FOR SEN. MIKE CRAPO

**House Resource Field Hearing in Jackson, Mississippi  
with Chairman Richard Pombo and Rep. Charles "Chip" Pickering**

**“Lessons Learned: Protecting and Restoring Wildlife in the Southern  
United States Under the Endangered Species Act”**

**April 30, 2005**

**Opening Remarks:**

**Good Morning.**

**Thank you Mr. Chairman for including me in this  
important field hearing to examine the lessons learned  
here in the South. And thank you Chip. I appreciate  
the hospitality you and the folks here in Mississippi  
have shown me during my visit.**

**The announcement this week of an ivory-billed woodpecker in Arkansas is a fitting inspiration for today's hearing.**

**The ivory-billed woodpecker, long feared extinct, has been seen after 60 years since the last confirmed U.S. sighting.**

**As we mobilize a recovery program for the ivorybill, the bird itself is a lesson of our need for strong recovery provisions in the Endangered Species Act.**

**We have succeeded before in helping critically endangered birds. For example, the whooping crane and the California condor both were at one time down to a handful of remaining individuals. Today they are both making progress toward recovery because of active and intensive efforts and the latest technology.**

**We should do the same for the ivorybill, and we should do the same for all our most deeply endangered species.**

**To guarantee that we can mobilize recovery efforts for all the most endangered species, we must make today's hearing our first step toward breaking many years of gridlock on this issue.**

**We all understand that ESA is a powerful law: one that touches both our wildlife and our property, both of which are precious.**

**That power, however, does not always produce conservation that helps wildlife and protects property. Frequently, both wildlife and property have endured conflicts wrought by the power of the Act misdirected.**

**Today we begin a new and different path forward.**

**On the new path, we must focus on points of agreement. I am determined to improve the ESA with bipartisan support in both the House and the Senate.**

**The key to agreement is an improved recovery program that respects landowners.**

**The steps to agreement are:**

- **improving habitat conservation and recovery.**
- **providing more and better incentives.**
- **and enhancing the role of states where appropriate.**

**We must insist on improvements that strengthen ESA for wildlife and for property owners alike.**

**If we take this path, the ESA will be less contentious and more effective – and we will have the votes to win passage of a bill.**

**The time is right for this new path for ESA and this first hearing of the year is the right place to get started.**

**I am encouraged by the willingness of businesses and private groups around the country to focus on recovering species.**

**I see from the testimony that I will be further encouraged today.**

**Thank you, Mr. Chairman.**